

TOMMY LEE BIRE'S OBSESSION

Laguna Seca
Mesa Marin
The Hanford Speedway
all fast wheels on
hot asphalt
a race somewhere once
a week for certain
his grandpa reflects
not natural for a boy
to jar his brain like that
no time to even think
about girls
nor nothing else

OPEC RIPPLE

Harry Downs
laid off at the refinery
looks out the window
from a crumbling stucco
duplex
on Panorama Bluffs

muses at the scene below
"Saudi Arabia of Kern County
they used to call it
don't really matter now

my hip is killing me
I'm gonna see that chiropractor
out on Stockdale Avenue

claims he can cure anything
from dizziness to muscle spasms
probably all a big lie

but I've gotta do something
can't drag around like this
forever"